For example, if one is worried that the ADA index reflects party identification, one can run separate correlations for members of each party between ADA and the dependent variable, or one can run a partial correlation between ADA and the dependent variable controlling for party (and for any other variables of concern). Neither of those techniques could “over-count” ideology. In fact, the influence of personal ideology is underestimated by those techniques because personal ideology may have been one of the determinants of party identification. By looking separately at each party, or by letting party account for as much of the variance as possible before looking at the relationship between ideology and the vote, one removes some of the variance in voting that could be attributed to personal ideology.

Confusion between public and personal ideology is a problem, but one that cannot be resolved short of hypnotic investigation of each representative. Certainly we cannot resolve the problem by defining personal ideology to be uncorrelated with public behavior and memberships (as Carson and Oppenheimer do). Such a definition of personal ideology can only lead to linguistic validity problems. As used by others in the discipline (and by the public in general), the term “personal ideology” does not refer to a measure uncorrelated with party. In fact, many may assume that personal ideology is a prime factor in selecting a party. A measure, such as the one proposed, which classifies Cochran as the most liberal U.S. senator—because he is more liberal than other Republicans from Mississippi—will simply spread linguistic confusion.

The authors suggest this defect in their article—twice on p. 173 they note that we are not used to thinking of ideology in this way—and, in their conclusion, they say “we now identify those who go farther to the left of their constituents as the most liberal.”

What Carson and Oppenheimer call personal ideology, others call ideological discrepancy. In their recent paper at the Midwest Political Science Association meetings, Covington, Fleisher, and Bond define ideological discrepancy as “the degree to which [representative’s] voting records are too liberal or too conservative relative to the type of district they represent.” In that paper, ideological discrepancy is measured using residuals from a regression relating district characteristics, party, and region to ADA.

There is just one theoretical model in which personal ideology and ideological discrepancy would be one and the same. That model assumes that representatives almost always vote the wishes of their constituents in an attempt to get reelected, and that any (usually minor) deviation from those wishes must be the result of personal ideology. There is no empirical support for such a model.

Most current studies show that constituency has little impact on representatives’ voting. Therefore, personal ideology must be distinguished from ideological discrepancy.

If any more proof is necessary that constituency has limited effect on representatives’ voting, it is found in Table 1 of Carson and Oppenheimer. There they use, in their terms, a “kitchen sink” full of constituency indicators (32 in all) to predict voting behavior, and still get an $R^2$ of only .54 to .57. Thirty-two columns of random numbers would have done almost as well (I got .44 for 1980). There is no empirical justification for assuming the constituency-influence model, and therefore no justification for treating personal ideology and ideological discrepancy as one and the same.

Ideological discrepancy is a variable of great interest to political science—but it should not be confused with personal ideology. There is no benefit in encouraging researchers to substitute a measure of the former for a measure of the latter. It is confusing to call Cochran a liberal; it is not confusing to say that he is more liberal than his state and party would suggest.

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Comment on Carson and Oppenheimer
(Vol. 78, March 1984, pp. 163-178)

I was intrigued by Carson and Oppenheimer’s recent effort at estimating the personal ideology of political representatives. I was especially interested in the table showing the ideological scores of U.S. senators for 1979-1980. As they suggest, the table contains quite a few peculiar rankings, especially for a number of Democratic senators, usually thought of as liberals, who appear among the more conservative members of that body.

I have no basic quarrel with their approach; in fact, it makes good sense to control for the regional and constituency characteristics of elected officials to establish personal liberalism scores. I see no problem either in throwing almost everything imaginable into the regression equation to predict ADA scores. As they indicate, their purpose is to minimize the sum of squares of the residuals to produce scores that take account of every conceivable influence that might contribute to a senator’s personal ideology. I do have a quarrel, however, with the inclusion of party in the equation.

As the authors make clear, they see party as a potentially major influence pushing a legislator either to the left or to the right. One of their ex-
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(1984) attempts to create a more statistically useful measure of ideology than the more commonly used ADA ratings. But although what they do is statistically rigorous and justifiable, what they are left with, I fear, is not a measure of personal ideology, at least not if we consider ideology to be, as they do, "the usual convention of ideology along the liberal-conservative dimension" (p. 164, note 5).

The problem, it seems to me, is that although what they do makes statistical sense, from the point of view of measuring ideology it is not substantively reasonable. What they want to do is to create a measure that is free from the problem of multicollinearity with other factors such as party and constituency, and to do this they use a technique that allows them to "remove" the effects of these other factors and leaves us with a residualized measure of ideology. The difficulty with this technique is that the problem they are trying to resolve is not simply one of statistical collinearity, it is one of substantive collinearity as well.

Party and ideology are related. Demographic or economic (i.e., constituency) factors and ideology are related. There is no getting around that. Democrats are more liberal, on average, than Republicans; that is one of the reasons they become Democrats. To attempt to isolate completely which is the "liberal" influence and which is the "Democratic" influence is impossible, and to construct a measure of "liberalism" that is entirely independent of party is not possible. The residualized measure that they construct may be measuring something, but it is not liberalism. Any valid measure of ideology in contemporary America will be collinear with party and with certain demographic features of society. This presents statistical headaches, as we get unreliable estimates of coefficients in regressions using these measures. But I for one am afraid there is nothing that can be done about that.

One look at their table of "ideological scores" of U.S. senators (p. 174) shows the difficulties of